

DESC Technique for Conflict With Residents and Families

Describe the specific situation.

Express your concerns about the action.

Suggest other alternatives.

Consequences should be stated and consensus should be reached.



Unfortunately, residents or family members may not agree with decisions or may be frustrated with the health care process. When this happens, consider using DESC to help resolve conflicts with residents and families.

Here's an example of a family member who worries that her aunt has a urinary tract infection, or UTI.

Describe the specific situation

I understand you are worried about your aunt. She is not acting like herself today, and the last time this happened, someone told you she had a UTI and gave her antibiotics, and she got better.

Express your concerns about the action

I am concerned that the risks of another course of antibiotics outweigh the potential benefits. I don't want to risk hurting her with a medicine that she probably does not need.

Suggest other alternatives

Instead of giving her a medicine she may not need, I'd like to see if there is something else going on first. She may have had a bad night's sleep. She might be in pain or a little dehydrated.

Consequences should be stated and consensus should be reached

I do not want to give her an antibiotic if she does not truly need it, because this could put her at risk for dangerous side effects. We both want to help her feel better. Would you please see if you can get her to drink some water or juice? Maybe you can also try to find out if anything is hurting her? I'm going to review her medications and her recent vital signs. Let's talk in an hour or so.